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Client Reference: ES-016

## IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re PATENT APPLICATION of:

Confirmation Number: 4465

**BALASUBRAMANIAM, *et al.***

Application No.: 10/743,275

Group Art Unit: 2813

Filed: 12/23/2003

Examiner: NGUYEN, T.T.

Title: LITHOGRAPHIC APPARATUS, DEVICE MANUFACTURING METHOD  
AND DEVICE MANUFACTURED THEREBY

### REPLY TO RESTRICTION REQUIREMENT

Commissioner for Patents  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

In reply to the Restriction Requirement dated June 1, 2005, Applicants hereby provisionally elect the invention of Group I, claims 1-24, drawn to a method for removing photoresist from a substrate. This election is made with traverse.

It is respectfully submitted that the search and examination of the entire application can be made without a serious burden and that the criteria for a proper restriction requirement set forth in MPEP §803 have not been satisfied. MPEP §803 states "If the search and examination of an entire application can be made without serious burden, the examiner must examine it on the merits, even though it includes claims to independent or distinct inventions." (Emphasis added.)

It is respectfully submitted that the search and examination required for Group I necessarily includes the search and examination required for Group II, and *vice versa*. In particular, claim 1 sets forth a method comprising, *inter alia*, introducing a process gas comprising  $N_xO_y$ , wherein x and y are integers greater than unity.

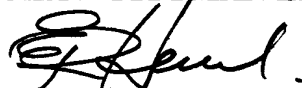
Claim 15 sets forth a plasma processing system comprising, *inter alia*, a process gas, wherein the process gas comprises  $N_xO_y$ , and x and y are integers greater than unity.

Accordingly, regardless of which group Applicants elect, the search and examination of the elected group requires the search and examination of the use of a process gas comprising  $N_xO_y$ , in which x and y are integers greater than unity.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the Restriction Requirement are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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